



Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

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WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
P.O. Box 42560, Olympia, Washington 98504-2560
<http://www.wa.gov/agr/>

Proposal to strengthen beekeeping regulations

OLYMPIA — A proposed rule would establish an annual registration fee for bee brokers and a schedule of monetary penalties for violations of the apiary law. Public comment on the proposed rule will be heard at 1 p.m., Nov. 17 at the state Department of Agriculture, Conference Room A, 2015 South First Street in Yakima.

The proposed annual registration fee for bee brokers is \$100. Bee brokers pollinate crops using beehives owned by someone else. If a person acts as both a beekeeper and a bee broker, the lesser of the two fees would be waived. Fees for beekeepers range from \$5 to \$300. All fees are used to implement the apiaries law.

“Penalties would be assessed after a written warning,” said Diane Dolstad, program manager at Department of Agriculture. “Violations may include failing to pay required fees, altering an official inspection certificate or refusing to identify apiaries or bee yards.”

If the violation continues after the warning period, a civil penalty of \$100 would be assessed. Penalties for repeated violations would increase to \$500 and then \$1,000 for the third and subsequent violations.

The apiary law protects Washington agriculture by facilitating the availability of bee colonies for pollination, promoting improved beekeeping practices and combating outbreaks of bee diseases or mite infestations.

More than 500 beekeepers are registered in Washington. Together, they own more than 60,000 hives. Honey bees are used to pollinate apples and other tree fruits, certain seed crops and berries. The value of honey produced in Washington last year was \$2.5 million. The value of pollinated crops was over \$1 billion.

Written testimony must be received by 5 p.m. Nov. 17. Send written testimony to Mary Toohey, Assistant Director, Laboratory Services Division, Washington State Department of Agriculture, P.O. Box 42560, Olympia, WA 98504-2560. Comment also may be sent by FAX to (360) 902-2094 or by E-mail to mtoohey@agr.wa.gov.

A decision on the proposed rules will be made Dec. 2, 1997.

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Note to Editors: For more information, call Diane Dolstad at (360) 902-2071 or Jim Bach at (509) 576-3041.